

All still to play for in election, says visiting Chancellor



VISIT: Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond with Shaun Hunt, of HG Homes.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer has said he feels "it is all to play for" in the election campaign.

Philip Hammond was speaking during a visit to a new housing development in Bottesford.

Mr Hammond said voting habits were changing and he believed the country needed strong leadership in order to lead the UK's Brexit negotiations.

Speaking to the Scunthorpe Telegraph, he said: "It's all still to play for in this election."

"Voting habits are changing and I firmly believe we need strong leadership."

"We need strong and stable leadership in order to lead our negotiations for leaving the European Union."

The Chancellor was visiting the new housing development project on the former Darby Glass site on Sunningdale Road.

Sixty-eight new homes are being de-

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veloped on the site by HG Homes and are expected to be complete by 2019.

The Chancellor's visit comes more than a week after the Prime Minister paid a visit to the Scunthorpe British Steel works on the campaign trail.

Like the Prime Minister, Mr Hammond said he could not guarantee further infrastructure contracts, such as HS2, would be given to the works.

However, he said Brexit would make bidding for contracts easier.

"We have measures in place which allow for more flexibility for procurement when we leave the European Union," he said.

Both the Chancellor and the Prime Minister have visited Scunthorpe as part of efforts to overturn Labour's

20-year hold on the constituency.

Currently, Labour holds a 3,134 majority in the seat.

The Conservatives have nominated local North Lincolnshire councillor Holly Mumby-Croft to contest the seat.

Mrs Mumby-Croft has said the local party would never be complacent about their election chances.

"We would never be complacent about where people choose to give their support," she said.

"Local people will think carefully about who they want to be their prime minister after the election and who they want representing us all on important issues such as the Brexit negotiations."

"I'm incredibly grateful for the offers of help and support that I'm receiving and I'll work really hard to share our message with local people."

IN BRIEF ... Phill in town

TICKETS are set to go on sale tomorrow (Friday, May 26) for a performance by comedian Phill Jupitus in Scunthorpe.

The stand-up comedian, poet, improviser and TV stalwart will be at the Plowright Theatre on Friday, October 13.

Phill became a familiar face when he started as team captain on BBC2's pop quiz *Never Mind The Buzzcocks* in 1996, which went on to run for 19 years.

He also appears as a regular guest on *QI* (BBC2) and is a regular panelist on BBC Radio 4's *I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue* and *The Unbelievable Truth*.

And his theatre work has included roles in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Producers* and *Hairspray*.

Tickets for the Scunthorpe show are £15 (booking fee may apply), and go on sale at 10.30am tomorrow from plowrighttheatre.com or on 0844 8542776.

Burst pipe

THREE-way traffic lights were put in place as Anglian Water staff dealt with a burst pipe at the junction of Messingham High Street and Butterwick Road in the village on Tuesday morning (May 23).

Fighting 'every day' to close gap



CAMPAIGN TRAIL: Tom Watson, deputy leader of the Labour Party, addresses Labour Party supporters during his visit to Scunthorpe

THE deputy leader of the Labour Party has said the party is fighting "every day" to close the gap on the Conservatives in the polls ahead of the election on June 8.

Tom Watson's comments come as he made a stop in Scunthorpe during the campaign trail on Monday (May 22) - a day which also saw the party launch its arts and culture manifesto in Hull.

Mr Watson said the polls show that Labour is closing the gap as the election campaign wears on.

"The gap has closed over the past three days," he said.

"I think it shows that people are frightened of what the Conservatives are offering."

According to opinion polls, the gap between the two parties has narrowed to single figures for the first time. Following a day of campaigning which saw stops in both Grimsby and Hull, Mr Watson said he felt it was

important that this area re-elects Labour MPs.

Speaking about the party's candidate for the Scunthorpe constituency, Nic Dakin, who has held the seat since 2010, Mr Watson said: "I think Nic is one of the best MPs in Westminster."

"People know that he cares about them in Scunthorpe and what he does to champion the steelworks."

Currently, Labour holds a majority of 3,134 in Scunthorpe.

On the doorstep, Mr Dakin said that the campaign was going well, despite Labour's position in the polls.

During his visit to Scunthorpe last week, Shadow Housing Minister John Healey said it was "important" that the town returned a Labour MP.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives have made the Scunthorpe constituency a priority among its target seats in the north, which also in-

clude Halifax and Mansfield.

Both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor have paid visits to Scunthorpe in recent weeks.

But Mr Watson said he thought the election showed the Prime Minister was putting her party before the country.

"We did not expect this election because the Prime Minister previously said that it was not in the national interest to do so," he said.

"Now she is putting her party's interest first."

The Conservative Party has nominated local North Lincolnshire councillor, Holly Mumby-Croft, to contest the seat.

Ryk Downes will be standing for the Liberal Democrats and Andrew Talliss for Ukip.

► To read their views on some of the issues affecting Scunthorpe, see pages 10 to 11

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